Liberty

NOT THE DAUGHTER BUT THE MOTHER OF ORDER — PROUDHON

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"For always in thine eyes, O Liberty!
Shines that high light whereby the world is saved;
And though thou slay us, we will trust in thee."

JOHN HAY.

On Picket Duty.

The strike has failed.

But, sooner or later, the Western Union and all other monopolies must go.

We are indebted to Mr Samuel P. Putnam of New York for a copy of his admirable and entertaining romance, "Golden Throne." Our readers will remember the long extract which we once printed from one of the chapters, clearly illustrating the philosophy of Anarchism. It is enough to say that the selection in question was a fair sample of the whole work. While fascinating as a story, it is also bold, broad, and powerful in its intellectual and moral teachings.

Louise Michel, the Anarchist, who *did not incite* a Paris mob to pillage bake-shops, was sentenced on that charge by a French court to six years' imprisonment and ten years' police supervision. M. Feuillant, the Orleanist editor of the "Gaulois," who *did incite* the same Paris mob to march on President Grévy's residence, has been sentenced on that charge by a French court to three months' imprisonment. Such is the justice that is administered in so-called republican France, which is not a republic at all, but a monarchy in disguise.

The failure of the telegraphers' strike is in itself a success, — perhaps a greater success than victory would have been. What more convincing demonstration, indeed, could have been given the people of the tremendous and dangerous power now wielded by capital? Certainly no body of workers has better advantages for carrying a strike to a successful end than the operators. If they make a failure of it, who can succeed? That is the question which the laborers will ask themselves, and, asking, will answer by eventually discarding strikes in the usual sense of that word, and devising and adopting more effective and far-reaching methods of obtaining justice.

Dr. R. M. Bucke's unique and interesting life of Walt Whitman, recently published, does a great service to radicalism and to letters by reproducing that wonderful and passionate defence of intellectual liberty "The Good Grey Poet," written by Wm. Douglass O'Connor of Washington in burning condemnation of the act of Secretary Harlan in turning Whitman out of the Interior Department for publishing an "immoral" book. The book also contains a new letter from Mr. O'Connor, which deals no less effectively with the persecutions to which Whitman has since been subjected. The two together furnish perhaps the highest example of invective launched in the cause of righteousness which English literature can show.

The movement to prevent English landlords and other aliens from owning American soil is one of those half-baked schemes which men who attempt to act upon a fundamental principle before they comprehend it are so apt to set on foot. The idea being in the air that property in land is robbery, certain patriotic Americans rush to the conclusion that Englishmen should be allowed to rob no longer, and that Americans must monopolize this form of theft. Why has not an Englishman, pray, as good a right as any other man to own soil anywhere on the globe? The truth is that no man, of whatever nationality, should be protected in the possession of any soil except that which he is actually using. Liberty will aid with all its might to turn out the landlords everywhere; but as she has condemned race discrimination against laborers, so she must also condemn race discrimination against capitalists.

Judge Nelson, whose fairness prevented the conviction of E. H. Heywood, and Judge Lowell, the other United States judge who presides in this section of the country, have given new proofs of their determination to do substantial justice by their recent decision in a case brought under the Chinese exclusion act. The master of a vessel was prosecuted for landing a Chinese laborer in Boston. It being proved that Ah Shong, the laborer in question, was born and lived in Hong Kong after that island became British territory, the court decided that he is a British subject and hence does not come under the provisions of the Chinese act. This decision confines the application of the law strictly to Chinese subjects. Thus our courts have done what they can to restrict the operation of the tyranny enacted by our congress. Judges Nelson and Lowell will have no share, except as American citizens, in the shame that will be felt twenty years hence at our cowardly conduct toward the Chinese.

"Every man's labor," says the New York "Nation," "is worth what some other man will do it equally well for, and no more." That is to say, if one man demands for his labor the whole product thereof, he cannot have it because some other man is satisfied to perform the same labor for half of the product. But in that case what becomes of the other half of the product? Who is entitled to it, and what has he done to entitle him to it? Every man's labor is worth what it produces, and would command that, if all men were free. "There is no natural rate for telegraphers any more than for bookkeepers or teamsters," continues the "Nation." No more, truly; but just as much. The natural rate of wages for ten hours of telegraphing or bookkeeping or teaming is as much money as will buy goods in the market for the production of which ten hours of equally tiresome and disagreeable labor were required. And this natural rate would be the actual rate if unlimited competition were allowed in everything. That competition is a potent factor in the regulation of wages we admit, but what we further assert is that, if competition were universal and applied to capitalists as well as laborers, it would regulate wages in accordance with equity. All that we ask is absolutely free play for the economists' boasted law of supply and demand. Why are the capitalists so afraid of the logical extension of their own doctrines?

We call especial attention to the admirable letter from Switzerland, printed in another column, written by Marie Le Compte. No one who reads it can fail to be interested. In translating Bakounine's "Dieu et l'État" into English she is performing valuable service to the Revolution. Such a book is much needed in England. We have a translation nearly completed, and shall publish it as soon as we are able. Miss Le Compte errs in comparing the man whom Labadie supposed to be unwilling to sell his land for public purposes to the man whom we supposed to be unwilling to give up his tools in order that individual production might be abolished. Instances of the former are not frequently met, and, when Liberty, which tends to make men reasonable and accommodating, shall prevail, they will be very rare birds indeed; hence it is comparatively idle to discuss the cases of such men further than to say, as we did at the time, that their rights must be respected. But instances of the latter would certainly be very common if "Le Révolté" should attempt to carry out its plan of preventing men from earning their living in their own way. Many reasonable and public-spirited men would at once rebel against any such act of tyranny. This, then, is not an idle but an important supposition, and we observe that "Le Révolté" shows no desire to consider it.

The letter in another column dealing with the controversy between General Walker and Henry George is very welcome. Such discussion of such a subject is always pertinent to Liberty. Upon the main question at issue between Walker and George as to the effect of improvements in transportation upon rent we have nothing to say, for we are not sure that we know which is right and are very sure that we don't much care. We are after the entire abolition of rent, and know that this can be effected only by lifting all restrictions from the business of banking and depriving property in land of legal sanction, thus knocking out from under usury the two props upon which it rests in nearly all its forms. The incidental causes of the fluctuations of rent are of no importance in comparison with this. Further than this we do not take issue. But our correspondent, it seems to us, is a little bit severe on theories and somewhat magnifies the relative importance of facts as opposed to ideas. Liberty firmly believes that experience is the source of all knowledge, and values as highly as possible Lord Bacon's innovation upon old methods of investigation. But induction never can supersede deduction, though it has become the fashion since Bacon's day to unduly depreciate the deductive method. A strictly logical deduction from true principles can never clash with a strictly logical induction from established facts. Any inharmony is positive proof of the presence of error on one side or the other; and the human mind is quite as likely to misinterpret a fact as to misconceive a principle. The only thing to do in such a case is to investigate further until the mistake has been hunted down. The world's progress has been largely due to theorizing. What do the few facts which suggested the Darwinian theory amount to beside the myriads of facts and conclusions which the formulation of that theory has developed? The trouble with the theories of the economists, to which our correspondent particularly refers, is that some of them are false and others are not universally applied. In the one case, disprove them; in the other, complete them; but never sneer at them simply as theories, for such a course helps to obstruct progress. We regard the average political economist as an abomination upon the face of the earth, but in fairness are compelled to say that, in our opinion, General Walker's neglect of facts is generally less fatal to his thought than Henry George's painful inaccuracy of reasoning is to his fearfully and wonderfully constructed philosophy.

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"A free man is one who enjoys the use of his reason and his faculties; who is neither blinded by passion, nor hindered or driven by oppression, nor deceived by erroneous opinions." — PROUDHON.

The Telegraphers' Strike.

A strike having the character and proportions of the recent struggle between the telegraph operators and their autocratic bosses stirs the whole social atmosphere. The Anarchist, who from his methods of thinking is an outsider in such contests, except as his sympathies are naturally with the strikers, finds many a curious and interesting lesson in the developments of the agitation, besides abundant confirmation of his belief that existing governments are deliberate conspiracies to blind, gag, and rob the producing masses.

The so-called "labor question" has come to be noised about so much that the American people have finally drifted into a vague conception that something which they are pleased to call *monopoly* is a grave evil among us. But a monopoly is impossible in nature and under Liberty. Monopoly is at war with the natural sense and the very self-interest of free individuals, wherever they are massed and left to their native sense of equity. There is no monopoly among the fishermen, themselves, who fish on the great banks of Newfoundland. There is no monopoly in a huckleberry pasture, where hundreds are gathering berries side by side. There is no monopoly among a hundred rude clam-diggers working side by side along the shore. Even in the Western mining regions, thousands of the roughest men have worked side by side upon their claims, without laws or lawyers, and never a monopolist dared raise his head. Upon any open field of free conditions a mass of men sufficiently depraved, ignorant, and stupid to see a monopolist gradually rise among them and unseat them from a fair chance at natural wealth and opportunity could not be gathered from the face of the earth.

Whence, then, springs this hideous thing, monopoly? If it is at war with natural self-interest and is never suffered among aggregations of people left to themselves, it is evident that it can never be born, except from its parent, Authority. The root and great central feeder of monopoly is the State, and all monopolies are simply appendages of it. Who armed Jay Gould and Cyrus Field with power to oppress their operatives, and who sustained them from day to day in the struggle just over? These thieves are simply using powers and prerogatives vested in them by legislatures. The legislatures, having crowned them monopolists, must therefore consistently defend their lives and the property which has accrued from the monopoly.

If the governmental arrangement which vests Gould with a monopoly, and then defends his life and property under the consequent oppression, is legitimate and worthy of obedience, then why abuse *him*? He has the natural right to do what he will with his own. If this property is his, then that fictitious nonentity known as "the public" has no more right to meddle with his business than with any other man's, — that is, no right at all. The greedy miner in the far West, or the presuming clam-digger on the shore, who attempts to secure a monopoly, does so at the risk of his own life and property, and soon learns that most wholesome of all lessons, that he must take the consequences of his own deeds. If the government which arms Gould with monopoly, and then fortifies his life and property against the natural retribution that attends tyranny and theft, deserves to be obeyed, then Gould becomes a gravely injured man when "the public" begin to vilify him.

The fact is that Gould is not the monopolist at bottom. The machine behind him that falsely calls itself government is the real culprit. Gould is simply the creature and ward. Goods and chattels acquired through monopoly and then defended against confiscation and destruction by the State constitute what is recognized under the law as property. Property thus defined is utterly impossible except through monopoly. Such property has no existence in natural law. It is robbery, as Proudhon pronounced it, under its own definition.

Hence the State, in defence of its creature, is bound to defend Gould's property. The vital secret of Gould's and the State's safety consists in keeping the striker under the sacred delusion that the monopolist's property must not be molested; for the capitalistic press well know that an intelligent attack upon the property of Gould soon resolves itself into an attack upon the State itself, which is virtually a conspiracy to create and defend property (robbery), the child of monopoly.

Gould's life and property being safe, and strikers being as yet so blind as to believe that they *ought to be* safe, the strike has failed ignominiously. Our steady consolation, however, in the face of this and other failures, is that it is only a question of time when industrial slaves will learn to strike at the vitals of the whole conspiracy. If they learn their lesson rapidly enough, the revolution will be a peaceful one, as Liberty hopes it will. But if the tyrants continue to put on the screws before the lesson is thoroughly learned, then physical force will be resorted to, and it will not take many well-directed blows to tumble down the whole machine and start such thieves as Gould, Field, and Vanderbilt fleeing for their lives. The time of strikes that will launch swift and telling thunderbolts at the heart of monopoly is perhaps not so far off as these blind demons of greed imagine. They are too drunk with power and plunder to heed the volcano beneath them. A new "brotherhood" is silently developing that will yet make strikes mean something.

An Ignominious Ichabod.

Opportunities of establishing one's reputation as a prophet are rare in this world; therefore the editor of Liberty proposes to improve the present occasion. In the summer of 1878, Denis Kearney, then in the height of his "glory," came to Boston. Brass bands and "Sons of Toil" met him at the depot, and the people filled Faneuil Hall as it was never filled before to do him honor. Labor leaders of all shades sat around him on the platform and joined in the applause. The present writer then chanced to be in charge of the "Word" during the imprisonment of its editor, Mr. Heywood, and took occasion to refer to Kearney in that journal as "the brainless demagogue who comes from California to advise Massachusetts workingmen to 'pool their issues,' forgetting that men can be permanently and effectively united only by ideas, and that to abandon ideas is to commit suicide. Kearney's opposition to the Chinese long ago branded him as a Know-nothing in policy; his incoherent utterances on Massachusetts platforms show him to be a know-nothing in fact. We do not object to hard names, and nowhere can they be applied more deservedly than to American capitalists; but indiscriminate and unintelligent abuse, founded on neither sense nor reason, is a weapon that is dangerous only to those who use it. In the name of Labor Reform, we protest most earnestly against its friends connecting themselves with, or in any manner countenancing, a man who can see no connection between ideas and the workingman's stomach, and denounces all reasoning beings as Utopian contractors with the man in the moon." For this outspoken language concerning the idol of the hour our loyalty to labor was seriously doubted, the "Word" was accused of going back on its record under its improvised administration, and we have reason to believe that even its owner grew restive in his prison cell at seeing his columns thus abused. Nevertheless we persisted, reiterating our opinion with added emphasis in a subsequent issue as follows: — "We wrote that criticism from a sense of our duty as editor of a labor-reform journal, and because we believed that the labor movement stood in great danger of being seriously blocked and hindered by one of the worst of the many frauds that have spoken in its name. In writing it, we used terms as mild as the facts permitted. Had we bluntly told the truth, we should have said then what we now coolly and advisedly and without prejudice affirm, that Mr. Denis Kearney is a boorish, unclean, vile-tongued, empty-headed, black-hearted blatherskite. We do not speak at random. For two or three months it has been our unenviable fate to be in this man's presence several hours daily, and the experience has only confirmed our previous estimate. That such a man should be able to deceive not only the masses, but the leaders of the labor-reform party, seems to us a greater calamity than a Vanderbilt, a worse curse than an Astor. . . . . In our view the 'Word's' treatment of Kearney is thoroughly in harmony with the course it has hitherto pursued; but, if the paper has 'a record' which would prevent it from fearlessly exposing a sham wherever it finds one, the sooner it 'goes back' on it the better."

A few weeks ago Kearney made another Eastern trip. Mark, now, the contrast! Stopping at Chicago with the intention of capturing an anti-monopoly convention, he was turned away from the doors on the ground that his pretence of representing the laborers of California was a false one, nearly all his old-time supporters having repudiated him. He took the train for New York. There the Central Labor Union declined to recognize him, and the trusted labor champions turned their backs upon the traitor, to a man. True, a New York paper says that John Swinton took him home to dinner, a statement which we can scarcely credit. If it be true, however, we think that Mr. Swinton must have been moved to do so by his well-known sympathy for outcasts. But, though snubbed in New York, Kearney's last hope was not gone. Boston, the scene of his grandest triumphs, still remained, and hither he came. This time no music to welcome him at the depot, no "Sons of Toil" to escort him to the Sherman House, not even a brother agitator, so far as we know, to take him by the hand; only a solitary newspaper reporter desirous of getting his penny a line for communicating Kearney's projects to the world. Of this last Kearney made the most, and nearly two columns of bombast in the Boston "Herald" conveyed the news that he had come to organize New England labor as it had never been organized before and would inaugurate his work by another monster meeting in the Cradle of Liberty. This bugle-blast awakened not a solitary echo, and the Cradle of Liberty has not yet rocked a hair. On the contrary, a few days ago a not over-anxious public was informed that the fallen idol, crushed again, had stealthily stolen away without so much as a farewell word and gone back to the sand-lots, presumably there to enjoy the fruits of his treachery. May we never see him more! and may we be pardoned for thus indulging a foolish pride by posing as a prophet, and earnestly asking labor reformers to beware, hereafter, of men who despise ideas!

Shall Strikers Be Court-Martialled?

Of the multitude of novel and absurd and monstrous suggestions called forth from the newspapers by the telegraphers' strike, none have equalled in novelty and absurdity and monstrosity the sober proposal of the editor of the New York "Nation," that unsentimental being who prides himself on his hard head, that hereafter any and all employees of telegraph companies, railroad companies, and the post-office department who may see fit to strike work without first getting the consent of their employers be treated as are soldiers who desert or decline to

obey the commands of their superior officers; in other words (we suppose, though the "Nation" does not use these other words), that they be summarily court-martialled and shot. The readers of Liberty not being noted for their credulity, some of them may refuse to believe that a civilized journal, especially one which claims to be of "the highest order" and to represent "the best thought of the country and time," has been guilty of uttering such a proposition; therefore we print below an extract from a leader which appeared in the "Nation" of July 17, and defy any one to gather any other practical meaning from it than that which we have stated.

The truth is that a society like ours, and like that of all commercial nations, has become so dependent on the post-office, the railroads, and the telegraph, that they may be said to stand to it in the relation of the nerves to the human body. The loss even for a week of any one of them means partial paralysis. The loss of all three would mean a total deprivation, for a longer or shorter period, of nearly everything which the community most values. It would mean a suspension of business and social relations equal to that caused by a hostile invasion, barring the terror and bloodshed. It is consequently something to which no country will long allow itself to remain exposed. It cannot allow strikes of employees in these great public services, any more than it can allow the corporations themselves to refuse to carry on their business as a means of extracting what they think fair rates of transportation. No Legislature would permit this, and one or two more experiences like the railroad strike will cause every Legislature to take measures against the other. Telegraphers, railroad men, post-office clerks, and policemen fill places in modern society very like that of soldiers. In fact, they together do for society what soldiers used to do. They enable every man to come and go freely on his lawful occasions, and transact his lawful business without let or hindrance.

During the rebellion, when all of us, except the much-abused "copperheads," temporarily lost control of our reasoning faculties (we dare say that even the editor of the "Nation" at that time forgot himself and became sentimental for once), we got very angry with Carlyle for patly putting the American Iliad in a nutshell and epigrammatically establishing the substantial similarity between the condition of slave labor at the South and that of so-called "free" labor at the North. England's blunt old sham-hater was answered with much boisterous declamation about "freedom of contract," and his attention was proudly called to the fact that the laborer of the North could follow his own sweet will, leaving his employer when he saw fit, attaching himself to any other willing to hire him, or, if he preferred, setting up in business for himself and employing others. He was at liberty, it was loudly proclaimed by our abolitionists and free-traders, to work when he pleased, where he pleased, how he pleased, and on what terms he pleased, and no man could say him nay. What are we to think, then, when the chief newspaper exponent of the "freedom of contract" philosophy deliberately sacrifices the only answer that it could make to Carlyle's indictment by proposing the introduction of a military discipline into industry, which, in assimilating the laborer to the soldier, would make him — what the soldier is — a slave? Think? Simply this, — that the hypocritical thieves and tyrants who for years have been endeavoring to make their victims believe themselves freemen see that the game is nearly up, and that the time is fast approaching when they must take by the horns the bull of outraged industry, which, maddened by the discovery of its hitherto invisible chains, is making frantic efforts to burst them it knows not how. It is a point gained An enemy in the open field is less formidable than one in ambush. When the capitalists shall be forced to show their true colors, the laborers will then know against whom they are fighting.

Fighting, did we say? Yes. For the laborer in these days *is* a soldier, though not in the sense which the "Nation" meant His employer is not, as the "Nation" would have it, his superior officer, but simply a member of an opposing army. The whole industrial and commercial world is in a state of internecine war, in which the proletaires are massed on one side and the proprietors on the other. This is the fact that justifies strikers in subjecting society to what the "Nation" calls a "partial paralysis" It is a war measure The laborer sees that he does not get his due He knows that the capitalists have been entrusted by society, through its external representative, the State, with privileges which enable them to control production and distribution; and that, in abuse of these privileges, they have seen to it that the demand for labor should fall far below the supply, and have then taken advantage of the necessities of the laborer and reduced his wages. The laborer and his fellows, therefore, resort to the policy of uniting in such numbers in a refusal to work at the reduced rate that the demand for labor becomes very much greater than the supply, and then they take advantage of the necessities of the capitalists and society to secure a restoration of the old rate of wages, and perhaps an increase upon it. Be the game fair or foul, two can play at it; and those who begin it should not complain when they get the worst of it If society objects to being "paralyzed," it can very easily avoid it. All it needs to do is to adopt the advice which Liberty has long been offering it, and withdraw from the monopolists the privileges which it has granted them. Then, as Colonel William B. Greene has shown in his "Mutual Banking," as Lysander Spooner has shown in his works on finance, and as Proudhon has shown in his "Organization of Credit," capital will no longer be tied up by syndicates, but will become readily available for investment on easy terms; productive enterprise, taking new impetus, will soon assume enormous proportions; the work to be done will always surpass the number of laborers to do it; and, instead of the employers being able to say to the laborers, as the unsentimental "Nation" would like to have them, "Take what we offer you, or the troops shall be called out to shoot you down," the laborers will be able to say to their employers, "If you desire our services, you must give us in return an equivalent of their product," — terms which the employers will be only too glad to accept. Such is the only solution of the problem of strikes, such the only way to turn the edge of Carlyle's biting satire.

A Very Interesting Letter.

Comrade Tucker:

The London mail has just brought me Liberty of June 9. That it was read over and over before any thing else was looked at goes without saying. How good is the article on "Memorial Day and its Mockeries," and very timely it reaches here to-day, our National Buncombe day! Ah! what memories brings this day of my last (three years ago) Fourth of July in America — in Fall River — with its sickness and poverty, pride and dirt, hard work and "shavings," saw-dust and whiskey, politicians! bunting! patriotism! and general vulgarity! The Republic of Switzerland is honoring the day by floating the "Stars and Stripes" everywhere with her own "White Cross" and with the "Three Bars" of the French Republic. And fit companions the pair of them are for the flag of my country! The "White Cross" which floated from the Bundes-Rathhaus across the way while the Federal Council issued its decrees of expulsion of Socialists from Switzerland, and the "Three Bars" of the French Republic which floated from the court house in Paris where was just read the sentence committing Anarchists to prison. "Birds of a feather flock together," says the old rhyme, and ill-omened birds those republics are for us poor proletaires. They have not left us even the streets! I am feeling terribly the sentence of my dear Louise Michel. It is owing to chance that I am not with her in prison, having been with her on the Esplanade. I was the "Anglaise" who wore the red scarf, and "led," as they call it, the rioters to pillage the bake-shops and knock the heads off the "St. Josephs," "Virgin Marys," and "Infant Jesuses" (horrible monstrosities in plaster that, as an artist, I would clear out of the streets anyway, even if I wasn't a revolutionist). But in truth I did no "leading." No one leads a Paris mob. It has its own way, like a tempest. Whoever goes before it gets pushed ahead or trampled down. I got *pushed ahead*, and the knocking down came when we met the police. I was the first that was wounded in the affray, and my companions bore me to a pharmacy, thence by detour to a place of safety (while the police were knocking down the others and making arrests), and finally I got off to Switzerland to escape arrest and to recover. But a requisition may be made for me any day by the French Republic, or the Swiss Republic may expel me as a dangerous character. Thus I am, poor American proletaire, between those two ruffians of republics which to-day are floating "the flag of my country" — and each other's flags — in honor of what they call "Liberty."

But I am taking my revenge! I am translating the "*Dieu et l'Etat*" of Bakounine here beside his grave, where are so many precious memories of his life, of his work, of his genius and audacity, and of his devotion to the cause of the social revolution. It is a great comfort, (now that I am hardly able to move) that I can still, through him, fight against *authority*, can still help to destroy *governments*; but be sure I long to get back to Paris, especially for the National Fête day, for my friends talk of making *their* demonstration in the midst of the flags and the fireworks. *Their* demonstration! What can it be, though, but to hang out the black flag of starvation and — if they are very daring — the *red* flag of revolt, and have them both cut down by the police in five minutes, and the "perpetrators" arrested, tried before a packed jury, witnessed against by police, and convicted of rioting and sentenced to prison for six or eight years, or, if they're very, very lucky, escape with their lives to a "sister Republic," which is ready to do the same justice to their crimes. Ah me! but the flag of the "Great Republic of the West" is well supported to-day by the flag of the Republic of France and the flag of the Republic of Switzerland. Oh! those flags! those flags! those flags! When will the proletariat shoot them down from all the Sumters of the world?

How good is the letter of Joseph A. Labadie! I hardly ever read a letter which so made me want to know the writer. The spirit of inquiry, so honest, so modest, and so fresh (when the natural result of such theoretical and practical acquaintance as he has with "schools" and "doctrines" is to make one at once arrogant and *blasé*). "Almost an Anarchist" you style him; so I'll not take the trouble to write him on the questions he puts to you, for he will be an Anarchist before long as sure as he has a *head* on his shoulders, and will answer himself — and others too. Any way, *I* don't think his "hypothetical cases of individual obstinacy" were "idle suppositions," as you do, but every way equal to your own implied question to "Le Révolté:" "What's to be done with such obstreperous individuals as may refuse to be thus summarily 'collected'?" But, any way, whether theoretically "in order" just now or not, they'll be thrown at his head the first thing when he takes the platform for Anarchy — as I feel sure he will. They've been asked me a hundred times in workingmen's clubs in England, and many's the hard fight we've had over them. Ah me! how well they fight for their masters, those English working-men!

Is it "Le Révolté" of Geneva that you are breaking a lance with now, or have you an American contemporary of the same name? I have not seen our "Révolté" since Kropotkine was imprisoned, but will be at the office in a few days and will look over the files. Since the arrest of Kropotkine, and Reclus having so much to do for the prisoners of Lyons and the prisoners of Paris, I can believe that different shades of thought have taken a fling in its columns. I am glad you made the challenge, because the question is *fundamental*; otherwise, I wouldn't like to see just now an engagement between "Liberty" and "Le Révolté." But I can answer for Kropotkine, who will not see Liberty (no papers being allowed in prison), that *he* would never want to "erect barriers between A. B., the shoemaker, and C. D., the tailor, to prevent the exchange of the shoes made by the one for the coats made by the other." How *could* he make such a mistake as that? Impossible! He knows too well his "*Qu'est-ce que la propriété?*" and, besides knowing it too well to begin with, is ever reading it anew. In a private letter telling how he spends his time, he writes: "At 10 I read Proudhon half an hour, then take five minutes' exercise by whirling my chair over my head, then read Proudhon. . . . . At 2 the guard comes to say promenade in the court. I promenade half an hour, then write on my "Prisons of Siberia" for two hours (all I am ever able), then read Proudhon." . . . . . Kropotkine must have read Proudhon through at least a dozen times in his life, but reads it still, — I should say, *therefore* reads it still, — for Proudhon's pages are like the very eyes of Liberty, into whose depths of light the fascinated gazer looks, and looks, and looks, and finds *new depths of light*.

The prison authorities take great credit to themselves that they allow prisoners to read what "books" they please, knowing that in a few months their poor victims will be too weak to read any; but they do not allow any copying or discussion of what they read with any one outside, for that would be "politics."

Now I want to consult you particularly about my Bakounine. I am translating it for the benefit of the Red Cross Society (English branch). The secretary writes me: "There is but one chance to get it published here, The Free Thought Publishing Company. All the others are too shy to touch such strong stuff." From my knowledge of Free Thought in England I am not very hopeful of the "Company" taking hold of Bakounine, who knocks the very ground from under its feet. So I ask you to see what you can do about publishing it in America. For it must be published. There is a demand in England for such a book, but it is a demand so out of the usual line that the publishers don't know it; and I think from the letter of Joseph A. Labadie, and from other indications, that there must be a demand for such a book in America. It might be well to give it the title, "Anarchy, or, God and the State," as the inquiry now is directly about Anarchy. When that is in the market, I'm sure we'll not hear any more of a man like Joseph A. Labadie stuffing his pockets — and his fellow creatures — with the gingerbread of Henry George. For Mr. George furnishes simply gingerbread, which excites, but does not nourish, while Bakounine gives us wheat from the virgin uplands of the world, which makes us strong, bold, rugged, and qualified to do the work that this century is called on to do, — destroy *absolutely* the old order of society and lay the foundations of the new.

My address is always "London, care of Tchaikovsky," to whose fraternal thought of me I am indebted for Liberty.

MARIE LE COMPTE, *Proletaire.*

BERNE, SWITZERLAND, JULY 4, 1883.

JOHN O' THE SMITHY.

SMITH: One who makes or effects anything. — *Worcester.*

Down in the vale where the mavis sings
And the brook is turning an old-time wheel
From morning till night the anvil rings
Where John o' the smithy is forging steel.
My lord rides out at the castle gate,
My lady is grand in bower and hall,
With men and maidens to cringe and to wait,
And John o' the smithy must pay for all.

The bishop rides in a coach and four,
His grooms and horses are fat and sleek;
He has lackeys behind and lackeys before;
He rides at a hundred guineas a week.
The anvil is singing its "ten pounds ten,"
The mavis sings from a birken spray,
And this is the song that fills the glen:
"John o' the smithy has all to pay."

John has a daughter, rosy and sweet;
My lord has a son with a wicked eye;
When she hears the sound of his horse's feet,
Her heart beats quicker, — she knows not why.
She will know very well before the end;
She will learn to detest their rank and pride
When she has the young lord's babe to tend,
While the bishop's daughter becomes his bride.

There will be the old, old story to tell
Of tyrannous wrong in places high;
A bishop glozing the deeds of hell,
The priest and the Levite passing by.
And the father may bow his frosted head
When he sees the young bride up at the hall,
And say 'twere better his child were dead;
But John o' the smithy must bear it all.

The smith and his daughter will pass away,
And another shall make the anvil ring
For the daily bread and the hodden gray:
But the profits shall go to the priest and the king.
And over the wide world, day by day,
The smiths shall waken at early morn,
Go to his task, in the old dull way
To swell a measure of priestly corn.

And the smiths shall live on the coarsest fare,
With little that they may call their own,
While the idler is free from work and care,
For the best of all shall go to the drone.
And the smith complains of the anvil's song, —
Complains of the years he has wrought and pined;
For the priests and rulers are swift to wrong,
And the mills of God are slow to grind.

But a clear, strong voice from over the sea
Is piercing the murk of the moral night;
Time is, time was; and time shall be
That John o' the smithy shall have his right;
And those who have worn the mitre and crown,
Who have pressed him sore in body and soul,
Shall perish from earth when the grist is ground
And the mighty Miller claims his toll.

McMillan's Magazine.

Walker versus George.

To the Editor of Liberty:

How the political economists do dread to leave the old, respectable ruts of illustration and argument! General Francis A. Walker's discussion in the August "North American Review" of "Henry George's Social Fallacies" is a good example of how the political economist is given to theorizing in the accepted way and to looking upon any proposition to leave the arguments, facts, and illustrations that have become heir-looms in the science as rank heresy. Both matter and method the theorist gets from his musty volumes and applies to present conditions, declaring that, if the principles were true heretofore, they must be true still. When the fact is that most of them never were true, and, even if they had been, would not be applicable now. This is the main reason why the political economists and all their teachings, with the vast influence they possess, are arranged so unswervingly against the rights of labor and the laborer. They get their theories by inheritance from the time when the might of wealth and power was thought to be right more than it is now. And the consequence is that they can not adjust themselves and their arguments to the new time.

General Walker's article is a thorough exemplification of this spirit. Henry George's main propositions contain fallacy enough, but it is not these that General Walker attacks. He applies himself to the arguments by which Mr. George advances to his conclusion and denies their truth in the whole. Notwithstanding Henry George's mistaken ground, he is awake to the present conditions and knows the extent of the evil of which he speaks. And there is a vast deal of truth in what he says, along with his fallacies.

General Walker devotes himself at length to Mr. George's proposition that "irrespective of the increase of population, the effect of improvements in methods of production and exchange is to increase rent," and pronounces it "not only false, but ridiculously false." And to prove his side of the argument, he quotes from Sir James Caird and Prof. Emile de Laveleye. Perhaps an industrial writer will some time arise who will see that the conditions in the United States are so entirely different from those of any old-world country that no comparison can be established between the two. General Walker argues that "whatever quickens and cheapens transportation acts directly to the reduction of rents and cannot act in any other way, since it throws out of cultivation the poorer lands previously in use for the supply of the market, thus raising the margin of cultivation, and, by consequence, reducing rents." Very nice, for a patent theory box; but, if General Walker would get a few actual facts to put in it, they would soon knock its machinery out of working order. It is strange that a man of General Walker's experience and observation has not seen that, when a railroad is built through a new region of country, it enhances the value of property, rents go up in proportion, the poorer lands, instead of going out of cultivation, are made slightly more valuable, those already out are brought back, and the "margin of cultivation" is lowered instead of raised. This movement invariably attends the building of a new road.

He regards it as absurd that a man should withhold land from cultivation for the purpose of speculation, and pronounces "a baseless assumption for which not a particle of proper statistical evidence can be adduced," Mr. George's allegation that increase in the valuation of land above its income-yielding power will withhold large bodies of land from cultivation, driving labor and capital to poorer and more distant soils. Nevertheless, in a new country where land is rapidly increasing in value, the expense of bringing it into cultivation is greater for a number of years than its income-yielding power, and if General Walker wants "statistical evidence" to prove it, he can find it in numberless vast tracts of land through all the Western States withheld from cultivation for speculative purposes and in thousands of small farms held by a kind of shiftless "improvement" that injures them far more than it benefits, waiting for a rise in prices.

In his opinions of the harmfulness of land speculation General Walker thinks that Mr. George has been led aside by the single instance of California, and has magnified into a universal feature what was merely local and accidental. But whether or not Mr. George argued by induction from a single fact, General Walker has not in his argument condescended to consider facts. One fact is a great deal better than none at all.

F.

BOSTON, AUGUST 11, 1883.

Over-Production.

We do not remember having seen the over-production theory more forcibly refuted than in the following significant editorial from the Boston "Globe:"

In attempting to explain the strike now going on in various branches of industry, and particularly the strike of the coal miners in Pennsylvania, the Boston "Journal" falls into the old error of attributing the trouble to over-production. The fallacy of this pet theory of economic sciolists has been demonstrated so often that there is no excuse for its reiteration other than ignorance or inability to understand the real relations of work and wages. Within a limited area there may be, and frequently is, an apparent over-production of some commodity, but in taking a wider view of the subject this is seen to be merely an appearance, — a shadow and not a reality. If there were no lack of coal in any man's house, no half-clad women and children shivering around fireless hearths anywhere on the crust of this planet accessible to commerce, over-production might be the true reason for stopping work in the coal mines of Pennsylvania. But when there is a dearth of coals in the homes of the poorer, and superfluous mountains of coal on the dumps of rich mining companies, it is plain to any man capable of reasoning that unfair distribution, not over-production, of wealth is the cause of all disarrangements and misunderstandings between labor and capital. The miners have been receiving three and a half cents a bushel, and their employers propose to cut off the half cent from wages and add it to profits, claiming that over-production has lowered the price of coal and made it necessary for them to reduce the share of wealth apportioned to the producer. In other words, the stockholders must have their dividends in order to enjoy their accustomed luxuries and swell their accumulations of wealth, while the miner must forego some of the absolute necessities of life. A half cent per bushel on coal means in this case a trip to Europe for the stockholder's family and less meat for the miner's family.

The miners asked the operators to prove by their books that they could not afford to pay three and a half cents, which the latter significantly refused to do. Wherefore the miners struck, justly enough; whether wisely or not remains to be seen. Substantially the same condition of things may be seen in the iron industry and half a dozen other industries. The iron manufacturers explain their attempt to rob the laborers on the grounds of unfavorable tariff legislation, unsuccessful speculation (for which the laborer is in no wise responsible), and prospect of future low prices. Because the laborer objects to being robbed in advance that the capitalist's interest may be assured for some future time, the mills are to be closed.

And when the laborer points to his empty larder and clamorous dependent mouths and appeals to his fellow-men for help, some well-fed, parrot-learned man, assuming to be his guide and teacher, says to him: "My good fellow, don't you see that you have worked too well? You have produced so much wealth that it is necessary to reduce your share for the present. Go hungry, like a reasonable man, for a few months, while we correct the condition of the market by consuming the surplus." Being only a drudge, and hungry withal, whereby you are more or less prejudiced, you cannot understand these matters, but the trouble with you is over-production. Produce less and you will get more for your share; don't you see?"

Some day the good fellow will see clearly that it is all a lie which the parrot-learned men have been droning in his ears, and that he has been grievously cheated by unfair division of the products of labor.

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